

Message Text

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53

ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00

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----- 102280

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5031

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 0929

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, PULNT, VS, AS

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN POLICY TOWARDS PRG

REF: A) SAGON 1538 B) CANBERRA 886

1. REFTELS CROSSED YESTERDAY, AND REF B PROVIDES BASIC ANSWER TO REF A. OUR PROBLEM IS THAT PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM GAVE WAY ATRECENT LABOR FEDERAL CONFERENCE TO PRESSURE FROM THE LEFT WITHIN THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY. HOWEVER, AND MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, HE MADE CLEAR IN HIS COMMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE (REF B) THAT HE IS BASICALLY OPPOSED TO THE GVN, HAS LONG THOUGHT IT WAS ON POINT OF DISAPPEARING, AND CLEARLY HOPES IT WILL DISAPPEAR IN NEAR FUTURE.

2. EMBASSY HAS TRIED TO SHAKE THIS BASIC CONVICTION, DIRECTLY WITH WHITLAM AND AT ALL LEVELS OF GOA, INCLUDING SELECTED MEMBERS OF CABINET, MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, AND OFFICIALS OF DFA. OUR EFFORTS HAVE NOT PRT NOT BEEN ENTIRELY IN VAIN, AS EVEN WHITLAM HAS ADMITTED PUBLICLY THAT HE HAS BEEN MISTAKEN IN PREDICTING EARLY DEMISE OF GVN. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO OUR BEST AND MUCH APPRECIATE VERY FULL COVERAGE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN SVN WHICH WE RECEIVE FROM EMBASSY SAIGON. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO POINT IN CULTIVATING ANY ILLUSIONS AS TO IMPACT WE ARE LIKELY TO HAVE ON

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WHITLAM AND ON LEADERSHIP OF ALP. AS WE SEE IT, ONLY

CONTINUED SURVIVAL OF THIEU GOVERNMENT OR OF NON-COMMUNIST
ADMINISTRATION ESSENTIALLY LIKE IT WILL HAVE MUCH IMPACT
ON GOA.

3. CHANGE OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, RESULTING FROM ELECTIONS WHICH COULD OCCUR (BUT ARE BY NO MEANS CERTAIN) IN 1975 WOULD BRING SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE ON PRG AND, IN FACT, ON ALL INDO-CHINA ISSUES.
HARROP

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NNN

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